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—H. A. Reinhold

THE

Commonweal

The Face of Italy

by Joseph Calderon

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by Rose Grieco

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

TOWARD A NEW POLITICS

AMERICANS have traditionally held ideology in contempt. The theorist, the crusader and the fanatic have been objects for joke and caricature in our folklore. Our politics have been the politics of expediency and easy compromise—as inexplicable to doctrinaire Europeans as their more hot-minded politics are scandalous to us.

This devotion to common sense and antipathy for political dogmatism have been a part of the national genius. They have contributed greatly to the growth of our unique institutions. But they have had some disadvantages too. Beneficial as our distrust of political categorizing has been, it has worked to prevent the maturing of a solid intellectual basis for American politics. This, in turn, has worked to prevent a clarification of practical political issues. Such terms as "liberal" and "conservative," "radical" and "reactionary" have for a long time been empty of real content (and frequently of real reference) as they are used among us. They have become mere epithets to hurl at one's enemy. An effort to rethink the moral and intellectual basis of American politics has therefore seemed increasingly necessary.

Significant steps in this direction have been made during the past year. Eric Vogelin's *The New Science of Politics,* Daniel J. Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics,* and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* have been brilliant beginnings toward the development of a new library of American political philosophy—a library which, in providing a critical analysis of our tradition, should have great influence in directing our tradition's future.

One thing seems certain: the old "liberal-conservative," "left-right" labels are inadequate to the present challenge. As now employed they usually confuse more than they clarify. They must either be redefined or a new vocabulary must be developed to take their place. And since the attempt to define a "new Conservatism" has already been undertaken, a corresponding attempt to formulate a "new Liberalism" should be made.

A remark by the English philosopher-theologian Father Thomas Gilby, which was recently quoted in The Commonweal, might indicate a proper area and direction for this task. "Particular parties may grow old and disappear," Father Gilby said. "The *Liberalismus* of the Syllabus [of Pope Pius IX] may come to look as antiquated as the Wycliffite Movement, and Gladstonianism may stir feebly only in the memory of the aged, but when the ideals of liberalism are no longer active in the State, then it will be time for every true man to think of rebellion."

WHAT are these "ideals of liberalism" for which every "true man" must be willing to fight? They are not, it seems obvious, the monopoly of Liberalism—especially that *Liberalismus* to which Father Gilby refers—doctrinaire, rationalist, condemned by the Church. They are, rather, the common heritage of any free society, and should thus be the common concern of those who care for such a society, regardless of their political orientation.

Certainly the ideals of maximum individual freedom under law, of the individual's immunity from arbitrary government action, of the limitation of majority tyranny and the protection of minority status are central and indispensable ideals for any free society which ever was or can be. They would probably be included among any "ideals of liberalism" which Father Gilby has in mind.

The defense of these ideals would seem the logical task of the conservatives since they are, by definition, committed to the defense of their society's character and values. One of the great ironies in our present situation is that the self-professed conservatives have, on the whole, shown little understanding of what their role should be and have actually consigned to the lower regions of "radicalism" anyone who has shown any heart for the struggle to protect principles which would seem to be absolutely necessary for the future of a free society.

The irony is doubled in the fact that, on the other side, many liberals have identified the assault on these principles with "conservatism." Much of our national discussion, on which matters of great im-

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port for the shape of our society must depend, has thus been conducted in an Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere of semantic irrelevance.

One of the first things we must have, it would seem, is a new grammar of politics in which those concepts which are basic to a free society are carefully defined. Our common heritage should be spelled out. We should agree—both "liberals" and "conservatives"—on those things in our tradition which must be defended, at whatever cost and from whatever enemies. We should know those things which we must not allow to happen if we are to preserve our nation's foundations.

The Commonweal is sometimes referred to as a "liberal" magazine. It has even been called a "leftish" one. The editors have never been certain what was meant by either label. As the task of defining the minimal ingredients of America's tradition—with their reference to the actual problems facing America today—continues, we may find out. We suspect that this magazine's position has really been "conservative" all along the way.

INDIA'S POINT OF VIEW

THE neutralism of the government of India continues to be one of the most baffling aspects of the postwar scene. It cannot simply be ascribed to the inscrutability of Oriental ways of thinking. Yet that is the way it looks when Vice President Radhakrishna defies all recent experience and voices the hope that in response to good will and a universal demand for certain moral values "the Communist system may democratize itself."

One of the hardest things for Americans to understand is India's attitude toward Communist China. Whatever natural solidarity binds those two neighboring peoples has been severely jolted on more than one occasion. The Indian leaders who went to Peking on a mission of friendship a couple of years ago were startled by certain harsher aspects of the Mao regime. Chinese subjugation of Tibet, right on India's northern border, came as a decided shock. Yet the Indian contingent that went to supervise the twenty-three thousand UN prisoners in Korea was startled by the vehemence of their refusal to go home.

The latest indication of sympathy with Communist China is the study India is making of Mao's land reforms. Official statements give no inkling of Indian awareness of the familiar Communist pattern: agitation and expropriation against the landlords; division of siezed land among the long-exploited peasants; collectivization, whereby the government itself takes back the land.

The Indian report in fact emphasizes the strength of private ownership of farm land in China, even in the cooperative villages. It expresses no concern that the essential farm machinery is provided by the Government—at present on loan until it can be paid for in instalments.

India's democratic sentiments, developed as they are in an Oriental and post-colonial framework, are genuine enough. Her proclivity for believing the best of Communist China stems primarily from Asian and anti-colonial solidarity. This is her strongest national political sentiment.

Hence to reach an understanding of India's outlook Americans have the formidable job of placing themselves at India's vantage point and then of recognizing that neither perverseness nor moral weakness explains that subcontinent's non-militancy. If Mao's regime continues in the familiar Stalinist direction, that should lead to the deepening disillusionment of India. If concurrently American policy is enlightened enough to shatter certain long-cherished conceptions about the West's democracies, the peoples of India and of this country will eventually come to see more eye to eye.

NEXT WEEK

JAMES O'GARA writes about the problem of isolationism among Catholics in this country.

"Perhaps if one could take the long view, the lag between what the popes preach on international affairs and American Catholic practice would not seem a matter for too great concern. It took a long time for the papal social encyclicals like *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* even to begin to enter into popular currency, but that process is now well started, and in late years the social encyclicals have almost imperceptibly come to be respectable. If one could hope for as much in attitudes on international affairs, the situation would look brighter than it actually does. But here the future is not too promising, and time is short."

THE PRESIDENT AND POLITICS

PRESIDENT Eisenhower's recent remarks on his plans—or lack of them—for the 1954 campaign set most Republican leaders back on their heels. Although he is deeply interested in the political complexion of the Senate and the House, the President said at a press conference, he does not intend to make use of the Presidency as an agency in partisan elections. In his conception of the Pres-

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idency, Mr. Eisenhower went on to explain, he sees himself as the President of all the people, even though he was elected by only part of them; consequently, he has no intentions of getting into what he called partisan struggles in any state.

Here, in a very few words, Mr. Eisenhower gave a thumbnail sketch of those qualities which at once supply the base for his great strength and for his potentially fatal weakness as a national leader. Whether he likes it or not, Dwight D. Eisenhower is the national head of the Republican party as well as President of the U.S., just as Winston Churchill is simultaneously Prime Minister and head of the Conservative party. But Mr. Eisenhower apparently possesses a fundamental mistrust of politics. For him, politics is never a tool by which the tasks of government can be accomplished; instead, politics is always regarded as something not quite proper, not quite open and aboveboard. Significantly, politics is never just politics; it is always partisan politics.

Typically enough, in this line of reasoning Mr. Eisenhower again demonstrates how close to the people he really is. For there is no doubt that this mistrust of politics is shared by the majority of the American people. To them, politics is at best something of a dirty game, a career few would choose for their children. Indeed, it seems very probable that a large part of Mr. Eisenhower's personal popularity stems from the very fact that he has not been closely associated in the public mind with politics and politicians; he swept the country at a time when the complexity of national problems and popular disillusion with past leaders made the American people hungry for a man who would rise above partisanship and narrow group interest. Mr. Eisenhower's failure to distinguish between his role as President and his role as head of the GOP may irk Republican leaders, but it will probably only add to his personal popularity with the electorate.

The actual political consequences of the President's decision are not easy to predict. Many commentators seem to think the President is risking his whole program by his hands-off policy. If Mr. Eisenhower's views were shared by most of the Republican party, this might well be the case. As it is, if the President were anyone else but the transparently honest Dwight D. Eisenhower, one might be justified in seeing in his actions a touch of Machiavelli. For the fact is that there will be many Republicans running next year whose views are sharply at variance with those of Mr. Eisenhower, and as far as the success of his foreign policy is concerned, the President would be better off without them in Congress. As a result, whatever the theoretical flaws involved in Mr. Eisenhower's determination to sit the next Congressional election out, it seems that he actually has much to gain and little to lose by his decision.

FOOTNOTE ON DESIGN

VICTORIANISM is timeless. We no longer have furniture offered to us in black horsehair, or lamps with carillon pendants, but we do have with us the new victorianism of chromium bric-a-brac and mindless wirework, driftwood lamps and pastel loveseats, sling chairs which are uncomfortable to sit in and impossible to get out of, the clichés which result from confusing style with stylishness.

An American woodworker of Japanese descent, Mr. George Nakashima, took this subject for a talk he recently delivered at the New York *Herald Tribune* Forum. Here is part of what he said:

"Truth is difficult to place in form. It is much easier to be clever, and cleverness has perhaps been given more credence than it is due, but we must have honesty to have a truly satisfactory environment. . . .

"After returning to this country [from the Far East] and reviewing the so-called best 'modern' domestic design, I was struck and startled by the poor quality and the lack of real feeling—especially for material—that design divorced from construction can produce. To me there seemed no other recourse but to start again from the very beginning as a woodworker. . . .

"Fundamentally, I have a primary interest in natural materials: the deep wearing of centuries of weather on the timbers of Horiuji, the clean, freshly hand-planed surfaces of Hinoki or Port Oxford cedar, the burls of English oak. I respond to the textures, colors and sheer art and craftsmanship of a good fieldstone wall, the stripped beauty of high-strength concrete. The character and history of a wide plank of walnut re-creates the life and death of two hundred years. The story of bitter winters and the searing desert summers of at least a human lifetime shows in the twisted, tortured forms of bitterbrush; the story of a way of life speaks in the beautiful wide unvarnished boards of a teahouse ceiling. . . .

"Style is not important and we could do well by forgetting it completely. If our problems are faced directly and sincerely, a design evolves, enriched by many skills. Such skills can be drawn from all sources available to us. All styles, and in a sense, all conscious design, are decadent, whether they are Spanish Colonial or 'modern.' The real issues are truth or dishonesty, and the so-called modern can be as dishonest as anything we have had. . . ."

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HUMILITY

WHEN you make a retreat the priest usually talks about the virtue of humility. You start to think about it then and wonder if you have it. But it is a tricky business—if you have very much you don't think you have it, and as soon as you are sure you are humble, the only sure thing is that you are not as humble as you might be. The humblest saints were keenly aware of their pride, and the proudest sinners are often inordinately conscious of their humility.

Two men went up into a temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and proud. The other was a publican and humble. And the proud Pharisee gave thanks that he was not like the publican and the rest of men, while the humble publican stood far off and asked God to have mercy on him, a sinner. This is the most enduring, and most endearing, definition ever given to the elusive virtue of humility. But probably ever since the story was first told, men have listened, agreed and then thanked God that they were not like the proud Pharisee. And other men have taken pride in the subtlety of their understanding which moved *them* to give thanks that they were neither like the Pharisee nor yet as proud as those spiritual dolts who do not see that one can take pride in humility.

Ordinarily, talk about humility is religious talk, sermon talk. As a virtue it is not especially prized in our public life. The go-getter, the sharp apple, the eager beaver are the heroes of society and usually walk off with all the prizes. But last week all over America people were talking about humility. The word found its way into big black headline type.

It seems that some time ago Arthur Godfrey found a young man who had a special quality that Mr. Godfrey couldn't put his finger on. Anyway, it was a salable commodity, and Godfrey, a shrewd showman, saw its possibilities immediately. He hired the young man, Julius La Rosa, and the young man—who has a good voice and knows how to put over a ballad—proceeded to enchant Godfrey's massive audiences by his shy manners and fetchingly awkward ways.

Then it seems that the young crooner lost his shyness—as who wouldn't after standing up before as many audiences as the "little Godfreys" face every week? He even gained such physical poise that, according to Mr. Godfrey, he found it necessary to rehearse the highly prized awkward gestures.

Abruptly one evening, Mr. La Rosa was fired while millions of his listeners stood by. Julius' last song, Mr. Godfrey told several million admirers, was his swan song.

None of this seems to me to be the stuff of great drama, but for almost a week the daily papers were full of it, with charges and countercharges all over the front page. And that is where the discussion of humility came in. Arthur Godfrey finally found a word for the special quality in Mr. La Rosa that he hadn't been able to put his finger on earlier. The word was humility. Julius had been humble, Mr. Godfrey said, until he fell under the spell of the big time. Now he had lost his humility, so he was no longer wanted on the Godfrey shows. Mr. La Rosa then denied that he had lost his humility, though he confessed he was not quite sure what Mr. Godfrey meant by the word. And all over America, people took sides. Everyone was suddenly talking about humility.

The general impression seemed to be that the elusive virtue was somehow tied in with shyness and genuine physical awkwardness. These qualities Mr. Godfrey bought when he hired Mr. La Rosa, but now, alas, they are gone forever. La Rosa is no longer the gauche kid he was. He even had daring ideas about managing his own career. According to Godfrey, he had lost his humility— and that above all was what the fans loved.

Now this is a butcher-paper magazine usually concerned with weighty matters. Maybe it is out of place to mention the Godfrey-La Rosa tempest-in-a-teapot on this page. But I wonder if in getting us to think about humility Godfrey and the tabloids did not do all of us a service. For instance, I think there is a parallel between this TV cause célèbre and the fairly constant criticism we hear these days of "proud intellectuals."

An intellectual, almost by definition, is a man whose training, experience and study have led him to see complexities where others see simple blacks and whites. He is a man who rejects the slogan's replacing the argument and consistently resists the cheap, shoddy and second-rate. Some intellectuals are undoubtedly proud of their knowledge, but I rather think that as a group those who know how little they know—which is almost a definition of the intellectual—are less subject to pride than those who don't know enough to know just how little they know. I often wonder who is really more infected with intellectual pride—those who strive earnestly to see the truth in all its complexity or those who do violence to the truth by vulgarizing it and reducing it to facile formula.

The anti-intellectual and the Philistine have always been great ones for wrapping their bigotry in the robes of humility and describing any disagreement with their own omniscience as "pride." They are very fond of the simple Breton peasant but don't seem to realize that after the peasants leave Brittany it isn't long before they have to start rehearsing the awkward gestures—that is, if they want to keep their standing as humble Breton peasants.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Future of the Liturgy

A REPORT ON THE RECENT CONFERENCE OF WORLD LEADERS OF THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

H. A. REINHOLD

FRANCE, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Austria and Italy have something that we in the American Church don't have: an official body to study pastoral (or parish) liturgy in the new era in which we live, not mysteriously and almost conspiratorially but in the broad daylight, under the direction of the local hierarchy. These official bodies, which command the help of the best living liturgical scholars, have met three times: in 1951 at Maria Laach, Germany; in 1952 at Mont Ste. Odile in France; and this year in Lugano, Switzerland. From September 12 to 14 a group of twenty scholars discussed the possibilities of reforming several liturgical rites that are now ossified and inaccessible to the people. A prominent member of the Roman Curia was present at the meeting and a personal message was sent by the Holy Father to encourage the work. While a certain amount of privacy was observed and still has to be maintained, it is possible to report that the discussions showed the most harmonious blending of historical scholarship with pastoral concern, in an effort to make the liturgy actually meaningful to the laity.

From September 14 to 19 the conference enlarged its base, so to speak. One hundred and thirty priests and laymen attended, bishops from the above mentioned European countries were there, and three Cardinals took part. The Vatican sent Cardinal Ottaviani, who gave obvious evidence of his enthusiastic approval, especially when he participated in the sung Masses at which a hundred priests in albs and stoles received Communion from the hands of the celebrating Cardinal of Cologne. The Archbishop of Bologna, Cardinal Lercaro, addressed the meeting by radio and made a fervent plea to lower one of the most formidable barriers to popular participation in liturgical life, namely the use of Latin, and to introduce the people's language for those parts of the Mass that are addressed to the congregation. Cardinal Lercaro's plea was unanimously endorsed by the representatives of all countries present.

The main topic of the Conference was a progressive reform of Holy Week in the same spirit in which the present Pope ordered and sanctioned the reform of the Easter Vigil. Country after country in Europe, even behind the Iron Curtain, reported on the first reform, now three years old and still in an experimental stage. What was so refreshing in these reports was the alertness of all to this opportunity to make known desires, criticisms, and suggestions. It became quite evident that the Holy See is most anxious to hear and to listen in order to give the Church the best form of these liturgies. Liturgical reform is really on the march and going in the direction of full integration of the laity into its sacred world.

It would be indiscreet to disclose the projects offered for the coming reforms of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday or for a final adjustment of the experimental Paschal Vigil to the needs and conditions of all countries. As I was asked to make certain pastoral proposals myself, I am quite conscious of the shortcomings of such forays into the field of pastoral reform. But the very fact that a simple priest, pastor of a faraway parish near the Pacific Ocean, was called to Europe to offer his thoughts on liturgical reform to the scholars present, with prominent members of the hierarchy listening, and that all this was done under the visible sponsorship of the supreme office for liturgy, the Sacred Congregation, is the most memorable indication of Rome's awareness of the liturgical movement. I feel quite sure that my proposals were neither very original, nor tested by the strictest standards of historical scholarship, nor were they necessarily even pastorally feasible. But the general direction in which they tended was, as I found out, right. And this direction is that of the Holy See: to bring the people back to the liturgy by bringing the liturgy to the people.

SOMEONE who knows is reported to have said last year that the dead-end at which the liturgical movement has now arrived cannot be blamed on the clergy who work for it, nor the laity, who cannot be moved any further, but that it is the liturgy itself which is in need of reform. Translation of the texts which the people hear, the pruning of dead rites, the abolition of features that are the outcome of a "clericalizing" tendency of the early Middle Ages: these are some of the reforms which

Father Reinhold, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Sunnyside, Washington, has long been a leader in the liturgical movement in the United States.

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have been specified. A French author wrote ten years ago that there are two reasons why the Church is in danger of losing its people. I quote from the excellent keynote speech of Monsignor Eugene Fischer, rector of the Strasbourg Cathedral, who in turn used the words of Jean de Fabreques: "The causes which produced the schism between the Church of our day and the masses who lost Christ are: the in-adaptation of our cult, our liturgy, and the inertia of the Catholics towards promoting social justice." Such terms as *"ennuie du culte"* are considered by no means overly bold in loyal circles of the European Church. All are aware of the problem.

The international liturgical conference in Lugano was impressive in many ways. The names of great scholars like Jungmann, Abbot Capelle, P. Rognet and many others were enough to give it prominence. The presence of Cardinals and leaders in various national hierarchies gave it legitimacy, especially after the warm, encouraging messages of the Holy Father, the Curia and others were read. Lugano wiped from my mind the picture of the Church that so many try to imprint on it: a static force holding back the clock, gazing with a suspicious eye towards the future, but always with a pleased look toward the past. That picture, which I have known in my heart to be wrong, is of a Church that blesses the brakes and shuns the motors, that is too afraid to listen to the people and to go with them, which is really a tower of reaction, even if it does not admit it. But here in Lugano where one felt the presence of Pius XII, and saw Cardinal Ottaviani of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office sing with the people and smile on the speakers, one knew in his heart that the Church is neither old nor young, but contemporary to all ages.

I had the good fortune of being able to talk with several priests who live deep in the darkness behind the Iron Curtain and also with a great Bishop, the Ordinary of the Diocese of Berlin, of whose bishopric only West Berlin is in the light zone of the free world. These Iron Curtain Catholics have no schools, no parish organizations, practically no charities left. They are deeply disturbed not so much over their material losses as over the appeal and dynamism of Communism and what they think is the lack of idealism in the free world. They were from different countries which cannot be disclosed, but none count on liberation; all plan on the basis of a future under totalitarianism. I expected them to be pessimistic and despondent, but I found not one in such a mood. The serenity of true witnesses, unprotected and exposed, was cast over them. They had dared to go to Lugano to tell us that in the oneness of Bread and Wine lay their great hope for survival and victory of the spirit.

If nothing else convinced me that the liturgical cause is worth a whole life's labor, these priests did so. They put me and all priests who tend their flocks in protected parks under obligation, especially when we remember that in some ways creeping secularism can be more deadly than Marxism, its man-eating twin. That the Pope himself showed his concern for a revitalized Church—a Church ready to lose all her worldly and well-insured goods, to be stripped of power and glory yet living the oneness of the Lord's Supper—is obvious. It was a stirring, heartening experience.

THOSE engaged in the liturgical movement for more than a generation, especially in America, have never lost the feeling that the majority of Catholics look on them with a certain sense of wonderment. How can anybody make such a fuss about one aspect of church life and a subordinate one at that? That seemed to be the unspoken question we were asked. Liturgy to most people is mere show, and show is play, not to be taken seriously. How little the average Catholic cares is evident from many symptoms: the empty pews at High Mass, the full church when a Mass is "short and snappy," the echoing void at Vespers and the throng at a catchy novena. But liturgy—where one needs a guide to know what is happening and even then is lost half the time!—what on earth do those who "push" the liturgy think they are doing? Isn't the liturgical movement like frivolous fiddling while Rome is burning? And aren't many others even wondering how in the Name of Jesus, the Man of the Gospels, anybody can advocate the half-pagan pomp and circumstance of a pontifical function with an old man instead of a pretty young queen the center of it all? Do you people, we seem to be asked, really expect anyone but tired and errant intellectuals to be attracted by rites half of whose beauty consists in antiquity and grand traditions?

Serious converts who study their doctrine with earnest and great devotion are, in my experience, not only puzzled by the nonchalance of priests and people, by their haste and boredom, but also by our claims that there is any resemblance at all between our Mass and what Christ instituted at the Last Supper.

And yet the liturgists are indefatigable in their efforts and take upon themselves the unpopular role of propagandists for a cause that demands too much from the ordinary faithful: there was and is the language barrier, the ancient music that delights the connoisseur but bores the man in the street, the rites and ceremonies that appear obsolete and odd, the apparent independence of the priest from all contact with the congregation and many more things that make the ordinary layman feel face to face with something which has little relationship to his life. Still the liturgists go on "selling" the liturgy. Their conviction that here is the heart of Christianity has never flagged. They see through the partly mutiliated and partly redundant rites that here is a noble and God-centered worship, a high form of prayer that nothing else on earth can match.

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Bridges have been built and wires strung: the dialogue Mass, for instance—but did the mind of the faithful really cross the chasm on this bridge or was it satisfied in merely seeing the bridge? Or take the High Mass sung by the congregation. Here a wire connected the priest at the altar and the man in the pew. But did a live current between the sanctuary and the congregation result from this? Did the strangeness and alienation disappear? Was there that community feeling, that oneness which was so evident in the first centuries? In theory we all answer yes, but if we look at the practice of our parishes, who would be so bold as to make such a claim?

European Christians have suffered terrible shocks since 1914—two world wars, revolutions, civil strife, depressions, death and destruction before their eyes. The happenings behind the Iron Curtain are not to them distant, incredible tales, as they appear to most of us, but stark and foreboding realities, things that may happen to any one of them any day. Many knew men and women who suffered and died in concentration camps and dark prisons or simply vanished out of sight. With this knowledge they would not forever obediently go to church on Sundays without the definite knowledge and conviction that this is more than Sunday "duty." You don't risk your position or endanger your children's future just to hear announcements concerning a money-raising activity, a hurried reading of Scripture, and the murmur of Latin from far-away altars. You don't go to church if church-going is dangerous business yet does not lead you to the Fact of God, the brotherhood of fellow Christians, the experience of salvation. If you leave church with merely the slight satisfaction of having performed a duty, you will not stake on it all you possess.

All this is hard to understand in a country that has been spared and favored for over a hundred years and whose worst memory is a depression a generation ago, except for those comparatively few who lost a loved one in distant wars on the other side of the globe. But we should not imagine that this problem is not ours. Secularism among us is like a gas that can't be seen or smelled but is yet as lethal as roaring flames or floods. Secularism is not Communism, but the results may be similar, especially if secularism becomes totalitarian and, without bloodshed or concentration camps, establishes a firm grip on life, squeezing the breath out of dissension.

This deep concern seemed to animate the Bishop of Berlin, speaking at Lugano. He called for a liturgical reform that recognizes that Christians must live and *experience* their brotherhood, their oneness in Christ, their immediacy to God, if the Church is to survive. Coming from a Bishop who stood like a man under Nazi persecution only to find himself, his clergy and people in the grip of an even more pervasive and iniquitous empire, the appeal created a deep impression. Cardinals, bishops and priests from free Europe, from behind the Iron Curtain, from America and mission countries heard him and echoed his concern. Everyone realized that the Catholic Church is the *incarnational* Church, the Church of sacramental Presence, of signs and symbols conveying divine life, as the Man of Nazareth was the Son of God. It therefore stands or falls with its liturgy.

LA MISERIA

The Face of Italy

JOSEPH CALDERON

AN Italian parliamentary commission has recently published its findings concerning the extent of "la miseria" in the peninsula. The commission sent investigators to the depressed areas—Puglia, Sicily, Calabria, the Alpine mountains, the Padano delta, Sardinia, the suburbs of Naples, Rome and Milan.

The figures released explain in great part why it is that the Communist Party in Italy is the largest such party in the free world with a membership of over two million; and why together with its fellow-traveling Nenni-Socialist allies, it received 36 per cent of the vote in the June 1953 elections.

The investigators found that 232,000 families live in cellars, lofts and storerooms; 92,000 families live in barracks and caves; 1,078,000 families occupy homes where more than three sleep in a room; and 1,391,000 families live in homes where more than two sleep in a room.

The commission was interested in the consumption of three items: sugar, meat and wine. To its surprise, it found that 1,032,000 families rarely could afford

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to buy these items; and that 869,000 families never could.

Misery, or "la miseria," does not mean poverty. Saint Francis lived a life of poverty but he was not subject to "la miseria." These people whose living conditions were investigated by the Italian parliament were not simply poor; they were in misery. Poverty is essentially an economic concept. It means that in-

come is not sufficient to purchase the goods necessary for the satisfaction of common needs—such as the needs for food, clothing, shelter and recreation. Misery means the lack of any income whatsoever. Continuing over a period of time this misery corrodes one's sense of human dignity, destroys personal responsibility and initiative, and breaks the ties which bind one to the community and nation. The individual subject to "la miseria" is excluded morally and physically from the production facilities and the distribution organization of the community. Soon he becomes degraded, an empty shell, disposed to fall into even greater evil—shiftlessness, chronic hatred of his fellows, suspicion, criminality, prostitution and disease.

The parliamentary commission reported that 1,357,000 families (11.7 per cent) pass their days in misery; 1,345,000 (11.6 per cent) families live a life of poverty bordering on misery.

The Communists scored their greatest gains in the south and the islands of Italy. The figures just released indicate why this was possible. Briefly, 28 per cent of the inhabitants of southern Italy are either in misery or so poverty-stricken as to be close to it; the same is true of 24 per cent of the people in Sicily and Sardinia. In round figures these percentages represent nine million people.

Once again was the old truism concerning the relationship between economics and crime pointed up by this investigation. It was established that unemployment, inadequate wages, overpopulation are soon followed by disease, prostitution, begging, criminality and illiteracy. In over half of these unfortunate families the head of the family worked as a farm laborer, day laborer, or subordinate worker. The farm worker in the south works 78 days a year; in Campania he can only work 43 days, and in Sicily 77 days. The daily wage is about one dollar and twenty-five cents for men and about eighty cents for women. The south depends to a large extent upon agriculture for its income. In Lucania, for example, 65 per cent of the income comes from the land. Opportunities to gain a livelihood in industry are extremely limited. Contrast this with the situation in the north. In Lombardy only 17.22 per cent of the income comes from agriculture. Lombardy produces 28.6 per cent of the entire national income, due to its huge concentration of industries, its commerce and banking services. This explains why the northern worker is well-paid, making more in a month than the southern agricultural worker makes in a year.

IT must not be imagined that little is being done for these unfortunates. The Italian government expends more on assistance and other social services than does the United States, Denmark or Switzerland. Approximately ten per cent of the national income is devoted to it. Adding together various programs, it can be said that Italy has set aside eight hundred and fifty billion *lire* for social services.

The government appreciates that the problem is not only economic but moral. These unfortunate people need to be morally rehabilitated, as well as given employment opportunities. They need medical assistance, job training, decent homes. An agency was created to provide homes for the poor. The *Casas* agency believes that the home is the central point for the rebuilding of the family. This organization builds communities where the inhabitants can find job opportunities. Homes are built with gardens. *Casas* also repairs and reconstructs houses that have been damaged by war. It has already reconstructed 300,000 rooms, thereby enabling 470,000 persons to have a roof. Over 25,000 rooms have been built, and work is continuing. Homes have been built for the unfortunates who lived in the caves of Matera and Borgo Cutro. Some thirty new villages and centers are in the course of construction in southern Italy and the islands. The government has built about two and a half million rooms since 1946. It has just completed 182,974 rooms.

Special attention has been given to the farm worker in depressed areas. The government has purchased arid and mostly fallow land from the huge land owners. This land has been improved, rocks removed, aqueducts and roads built. The land is fertilized. Each

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farmer is given a holding ranging from three to twenty acres, depending upon the availability of land and the demand. On each holding is a new farmhouse, with a red tile roof. This house has a large storeroom, a stall for animals, a large kitchen, and two bedrooms. There are running water and electric light. The reform areas are the Po Delto, the Maremma and Fucino, Apulia, Lucania, Calabria and Sardinia. To date, more than 700,000 families have been resettled on land of their own.

This is not simply a land distribution program. It is a rebuilding not only of the land but of the family. Within walking distance of each set of farm houses, a community center is either reconstructed or built anew. This center contains a church with a resident priest, a nursery run by sisters, a first aid station, a clubhouse, a large meeting room where movies can be shown, and a cooperative grocery store. The men are instructed in the latest methods of scientific farming and husbandry. They are given fertilizer, seeds and young fruit trees and vines. The government gives tractors and other farm equipment to the community cooperative. Knowing that the farmer cannot support his family for the first three years, the government provides him with work to supplement his income from his subsistence farm. The yield per acre on these farms has been at least twice greater than those in the same area not in the reform program. Each farm costs the government approximately six thousand dollars. The farmer pays three thousand dollars for it over a period of thirty years.

In simple terms what does this program mean? Perhaps it can best be illustrated by a story. A woman with several children was given a farm. She formerly lived in a dark and damp hovel, with no windows, no electric light, a dirt floor. Chickens and pigs slept in the same room with the family. "What does this mean to you?" she was asked as she was given the keys to her new home. "Now," she replied with tremendous joy, "now I can marry my daughters. We'll have enough for a dowry for each daughter." Another woman, a Communist activist, was asked, "How do you like this kind of revolution?" She responded, "This is no revolution. This is pure joy." The program will not fully be realized for another eight years or so. Rural villages are continually being built, land improved and irrigated, farm houses constructed. Such new villages as Villa Immacolatea, Gaudiano, Borgo Liberta, and Santa Maria di Rispecia are just the beginning of a whole series of community centers in reform areas.

For the first time in their lives, families in these areas can eat an abundance of fruit and vegetables, can eat eggs and drink milk, can eat meat. Production of foodstuffs has increased and been placed within the reach of people who were either poverty-stricken or in misery. But best of all, men and women are being rehabilitated, given a sense of their personal dignity, encouraged to participate in the social life of their community. A new life has been made available to these formerly unfortunate people. They are now buying dress and suit material, bicycles, shoes, kitchen implements, toys.

THE Italian government created an agency to rebuild the south and create conditions favorable to its industrialization. This agency is called "Cassa per il Mezzogiorno" or Southern Italy Fund. It is a coordinating and financing agency. This agency has built super-highways and roads, electric power plants, dams, aqueducts, homes, industries in the south and in the Italian islands. It also has erected schools, bridges, and workshops. Over a trillion *lire* have already been expended. Electric power has been almost doubled in this area. Mining of sulphur, aluminum and other minerals have far exceeded pre-war levels. Shipping has increased considerably. This agency has set aside another trillion *lire* to increase agricultural productivity within ten years.

The reforestation and workshop program were first proposed by the present Minister of the Interior, Amintore Fanfani. He got the idea from our New Deal program. It has been a terrific success. It was proposed to create job opportunities for the unemployed. American officials were originally cold to the proposal, saying that the program failed in the United States. It

led to boondoggling, they said. Fanfani assured the ECA that it would succeed in Italy. It did. Bare mountains are now covered with small trees. Timber lands have been created. With the passage of years this formerly unproductive mountain area will be the source of great timber wealth. The workshops have been responsible for thousands of miles of new roads. The workshop program gave work to 763,499 workers

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in 1952. Men and women have learned new trades under this program.

It is fairly obvious that Italy cannot lick the problem alone. Its land area is limited and so are its financial resources. The last war destroyed one-third of its wealth. In money terms, Italy's wealth and capital goods were destroyed by ten trillion *lire*. All had to be rebuilt.

Industrial production had dropped 40 per cent below 1938 levels; consumption of foodstuffs had dropped about 50 per cent. Foreign trade had vanished. Refugees overcrowded the limited housing left standing. Thanks to American aid, Italy was able to overcome her pressing problems and pass beyond her pre-war levels. Today the *lira* is a strong currency; savings are on the increase; national income is rising. Despite this unemployment is rising. There are now approximately two and a half million unemployed. There are thousands upon thousands of professional people and trained machinists who have yet to get their first job. Extremism in political thinking is growing among the youth. The Communist party is gaining the youth, as was shown by the elections last June. The anti-constitutionalist Monarchist Party and the revolutionary fascist party considerably increased their number of deputies as a result of the election returns. The moderate center parties sustained losses in parliament. The danger signals are sounding. Italy must export her products and her labor. The United States must lower tariff and immigration barriers. Will the U. S. and other nations of the free world like Canada, Australia, and Brazil do something effective before it is too late?

LA GENTILEZZA

The Heart of Italy

ROSE GRIECO

DURING my travels in Italy, I was in the peculiarly happy position of mingling intimately with the Italians because of my "sangue puro" —I have Italian ancestors on both sides—and of observing them objectively because I am American-born and bred. A number of times when a particularly personal Italian problem was being discussed, and a newcomer to the group would look inquiringly at me, some dear soul would clear the air by explaining simply, "E una di noi." She's one of us. And because I was considered one of them, I was able to see us through Italian eyes. It was quite a revelation.

I hadn't been in Italy long before I discovered the magic words that permitted entrance into Italian hearts and homes. It happened at Capri, while I was walking down the cobblestoned path that leads to the sea. At a crossroads, shaded by an enormous tree, I came upon Carmelina, the souvenir-vendor, and Frate Domenico, the monk, seated on a stone bench which faced the ancient Carthusian monastery not far below. After I bought some souvenirs, they invited me to sit with them a while, for the sun was hot in the azure skies. There followed a few moments of polite, pleasant conversation; for the secret of my Italian blood was still well hidden behind my appalling accent. I suppose the best way to describe it is to tell you that after listening to me speak Italian for a few moments, the monk inquired gently if I were Austrian. It was then that I discovered the power of those magic words, "Sono Italo-Americana."

Immediately the atmosphere changed. Carmelina stared for a few wondrous seconds; then, in the manner of discovering a long-lost relative, embraced me warmly and kissed me on both cheeks, as Frate Domenico proceeded to hand me a rosary. I had arrived. Once I realized my power, I went completely overboard. I used the magic words indiscriminately from Capri to Milan, and from Venice down to Naples. The reaction of the Italians, from the titled to the peasants, never varied. I was treated like everybody's first cousin, and the "accident" of my birth in America was serenely overlooked.

One time, when I was looking for La Scala in the bustling city of Milan, I stopped in the middle of an unusually busy intersection, where a carabiniere was directing traffic. Once my identity was established, he brought traffic on all sides to a halt, as he engaged me in helpful, solicitous conversation. Not a car moved; not a horn sounded. I felt like royalty.

Another time I wanted to see the famous Lupa of Roman legend, which is in the Campidoglio. I was leaving for Naples in the afternoon, and it was imperative that I see the legendary She-Wolf that morning. At the capitol, I discovered the building was not

Miss Grieco wrote "They Who Mourn," which appeared in The Commonweal last March.

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open to the public that day because of an important meeting. I never batted an eye, for by now I realized what it meant to be an Italian-American in Italy. I had also learned to appreciate the impact of a touching performance on any Italian —even on the guards outside the capitol; besides which, Italian men are in love with the *idea* of woman. Armed with the three invincible weapons of having pure Italian blood, being a woman, and possessed of the ability to bring tears to a glass eye, I went into battle. First to fall were the *carabinieri* on guard; the next line of defense was quickly disposed of in the person of their captain. He acknowledged defeat, and happily took me to see the gentleman in charge of giving special passes to special people. He was a sweet old man who looked as if he were going to cry when I told him I could nevermore face my Uncle Angelo if I returned home without having seen La Lupa; for it was at his knees that I had first heard the story of Romulus and Remus, and since my uncle was too old and tired ever to see his beloved Italy again, I was the bearer of his love and devotion to his native land, and especially to La Lupa.

THE Signer of the Special Passes succumbed. No Italian can long resist an appeal aimed directly at the heart, and I went at his heart with all barrels loaded. As I watched him sign the all-important pass, I came to the realization that if Italians have a national fault, it's in possessing too much heart. That's what made it so easy for this unscrupulous traveler to gain quick access into supposedly inaccessible places. Until the day I left Italy, I continued to marvel at the magnificent ease with which Italian laws dissolve when confronted by the longings of the human heart.

As I shook hands warmly with the Signer (I never did learn his official title), we wished each other all the good things of heaven and earth. I know I should have felt guilty in taking adantage of so much kindness and understanding, but I didn't, as I sailed blithely through immense marble halls, and up endless flights of marble stairs, past newsmen, photographers and all manner of dignitaries. At last I reached the room where the ancient dark She-Wolf reposes serenely, reminding her viewers of the meagerness of one life's span; and I thought of my uncle, growing old amidst the noise and confusion of New York, but still full of memories of his youth in Italy. I visualized him standing perhaps where I was standing, fifty long years ago, meditating on the glories of Rome. Silently, I communicated his love and respect to La Lupa and all she represented. Having fulfilled this obligation through the happy combination of a flair for Italian dramatics, plus ordinary American drive, I left Rome with a clear conscience and a lighter heart.

BY this time, I had acquired the extremely healthy habit of keeping clear of the places catering to Americans. I was going to spend the rest of my life fraternizing with Americans, so I took most of my meals in the typical *trattoria,* where the Italians eat. As my accent began to clear up, and the warmth and friendliness of the people began to settle snugly around my heart, I found myself talking to anybody and everybody. In this way, I began to get a picture of how we appear to Italians. I was happy to hear of their very real gratitude for all the help we've given them. One gentleman described his feeling with typical Italian fervor by saying, "When anyone mentions the United States, we should all bow three times." I assured him that wasn't necessary.

However, aside from appreciating our generosity, Italians find us a very strange breed. For instance, they cannot understand our preoccupation with television. In a country where daily living is charged with an abundance of love, music, drama and tears, the idea of spending endless hours seated passively before a screen, absorbed in the affairs of total strangers, remains an unhappy mystery. Italians are great lovers of the theatre in many forms, but they are not so concerned with it that they ignore the drama that evolves out of their own daily living. Because of the intensity of feeling with which they are blessed, (or cursed, depending on the situation involved) what might elsewhere be simply an ordinary love affair, family feud, or expected loss, manages to develop into an overwhelming romance, the battle of the ages, or stark tragedy. In other words, they create their own entertainment, and become the leading players in the drama of life.

ANOTHER phase of our living which leaves Italians startled is the fact that we constantly run ourselves ragged in order to acquire the comforts of life. The Italian earns little and enjoys much. In the evening, he wanders into the *piazza,* and for the price of a cup of *café espresso,* or seven cents, he has an evening's entertainment, as he sits with family or friends at a little table, listening to the music provided by the inevitable town band, talking

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and singing and arguing, as he relaxes under the stars. If he doesn't want to buy coffee, he can sit on the church steps, and enjoy the activities that transpire in the square. Perhaps his ability to relax is due in part to the fact that he has never read an article on how to go about it.

As I became familiar with Italian home life, I sensed a strange harmony which, when I gave it serious thought, forced me to the conclusion that it is the result of following quite naturally the formula expressed in that beautiful proverb, "The man is the head of the house; the woman is the heart." The roles leave no room for competition because of their difference. I believe that much of the serenity of Latin women lies in that they are not so interested in being treated as equals, but as women. This simple, well-ordered state of affairs leaves our romantic neighbors baffled and somewhat horrified at the suggestion which is predominant in our humor and much of our literature, that the purpose in life of the American female is completely to subjugate the male. The idea that a sweetheart, wife or daughter always gets the better of the man in the picture is not only unfunny to an Italian, it is appalling.

They find it difficult to understand our baby-sitting problem, because in Italy, it doesn't exist. This homey chore is automatically relegated to the grandparents, who have often reached the age where the question of social security should enter the picture. Thus, two problems are neatly resolved. The old people have the most precious kind of security, that of being cared for by those they love, and the children are guarded by those who love them. Our concern with our aged seems strange to a people whose pattern of living sees no alternative but to keep their parents with them, as retired rulers of their particular little kingdom, the family. To suggest to an Italian that he send an aged, ailing parent to a nursing home, is tantamount to suggesting that he cut off the main artery to his heart. No doubt the parent would die within a week, for even though he may disagree with his daughter-in-law, and perhaps be difficult with his son, the important thing to all concerned is that he is where he belongs.

THESE are some of the impressions I had acquired when the time for my departure came. Although I was anxious to see my family and friends in America, I felt a strange reluctance to leave a country I had grown to love, and a people who had completely overwhelmed me with that untranslatable "gentilezza" of theirs. In any case, I had managed to face the reality of my impending departure in fairly good spirits. And then, at the airlines terminal I happened to glance at two American magazines, and scanning the list of featured articles, I beheld such delectable bits as "How to Get Along with Your Nerves," "Pornography in Our Schools," and "Is Alcoholism Curable?" I was momentarily stunned, for I had only a moment before been still full of the warmth and simplicity of Italy, where a psychiatrist would quickly starve to death, and now I was thrown mercilessly back into an awareness of our peculiar American national problems. I weakly sat down, trying to think it out, confronted only by a giant question-mark. What has happened to us, I kept asking myself. Why is there so much talk about sex, and so little about love? Why do so many people drink themselves into a stupor, instead of for the enjoyment of meals and life in general? Why is there pornography among our youth, and so few beautiful nudes in our public buildings and squares? Something was wrong somewhere.

I think the slowest steps I have ever taken as an adult were those leading to the airlines bus. When the handsome Italian officer closed the door after us, saluted smartly, and remained standing at attention as we pulled out, his motionless face not quite able to hide the message his eyes were sending, that of a safe trip home, I thought I was going to cry. But my American self-restraint would not permit it. Then, the only Italian on the bus, a middle-aged woman on her way to Paris, waved her handkerchief at the disappearing cypress trees, and called out brokenly, "*Addio, Roma.*" Maybe that was what was wrong. We don't cry out "Farewell, Rome," when we feel like it.

Perhaps that is why more and more Americans are finding their way to Italy. For we need reassurance that even in the fury of the twentieth century, the fine art of conversation still exists, the enjoyment of each moment as its passes is possible, and penniless people still sing to the stars.

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THE STAGE

END AS A MAN

THE dramatic abstract which Mr. Calder Willingham has fashioned out of his corrosive novel of academic life raises again the question of adaptations in our theater. Adaptation is, as Mr. Eric Bentley remarked on another occasion, a racket; an act indulged in by people unable to make intelligent distinctions, "sometimes defensible in itself, but in the context of a wicked world . . . [leading] to abuses."

Of abuse, Mr. Willingham has certainly not been guilty, yet I am unable to regard his work here with the equanimity and respect it quite probably should evoke. This luckless unease would seem to spring largely from my inability—indeed, disinclination—to rinse from my memory the mordant recollection of Mr. Willingham's novel and replace it with the violent, abbreviated sketch at the Vanderbilt. This is no doubt a critical failure, for there is much to admire in "End as a Man:" a smarting perception of character, and the brilliant *éclat* with which the playwright and his company consistently bring off a series of intelligent theatrical strokes. Yet with the greatest degree of good will, I cannot but view the effort as a species of exercise, studded with interest, but dramatically incapable of engaging the attention on the level of moral indignation which Mr. Willingham, as novelist, so boldly inhabited.

The distance of fiction from the drama is one of kind, not degree: the novel permits an amplitude, a slow accretion of detail, exactly designed to support the weight of social portraiture in which a writer of Mr. Willingham's preoccupation excels. And a muscular intellectual structure is proper to fiction as it never is to the drama: indeed, the novel is the primary imaginative form in which we may investigate ideas in their social consequences.

It was this solid grounding in a powerful, assertive impulse of the mind which absolved the fictional "End as a Man" of sensationalism. Without that root, the stage version is more vulnerable. It succumbs too often to a gratuitous sadistic excess; the savagery of its malevolent cadets seems as antic as it does horrifying. And a hasty, final condemnation of the ethics of Mr. Willingham's grisly academy does not bring into any impressive perspective the parade of barbarisms of which the evening has consisted.

The performance, however, is vigorous and incisive, charged with the vitality of an astonishing group of young men recruited from the Actors Studio. Ben Gazzara plays the barracks Machiavelli with a coiled, sulky malice which finely conveys the terrible power and ingenuity of a psychopathic mind, while Arthur Storch, William Smithers and Albert Salmi contribute portraits etched in venom. In the zoo, these animals turn and rend each other cruelly, but the scene unhappily shares an equivalent poverty of human reference. (*At the Vanderbilt.*)

LATE LOVE

MISS Rosemary Casey has confected her comedy out of so much that is bright and winning that I wish she might have disciplined herself to the task of bringing it to the point of success. "Late Love" is full of resource and lazy amiability; many of its conceits are neatly turned. But Miss Casey, with her hand frequently in the pocket of wit, often comes up with small change. Drafts of sentiment invade her glossy, civilized setting, and the surface of her comedy—so patchy and gay with pleasure—finally loses its luster under a shower of lavender water. Arlene Francis, warm and subtly accomplished, and Lucile Watson as a crusty matriarch, keep the bubble floating, but Miss Casey lets them down. A solid diversion can be enchanting, and I hope that next time around Miss Casey will give us more of her own sure, sharp talent. (*At the National.*)

VICTOR BORGE'S "COMEDY IN MUSIC"

MR. Borge, a piano, three resourceful electricians and the mangiest hound-dog conceivable constitute the personnel at the Golden. I shall not attempt to chronicle the proceedings, except to note that they are manic but never depressive, involving Mr. Borge's grandfather (inventor of 4-Up, 5-Up, 6-Up: he never knew how close he came), the Blue Danube Waltz played in reverse, that indestructible verbal punctuation, and a version of "Liebestraum" recollected in loathing. A bit on the thin side, perhaps, but then to each his Borge. (*At the Golden.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

FOR those who like sweet-sad whimsey, the Italians have done a remarkable job in turning "The Overcoat," Gogol's satirical story of greed and bureaucracy in nineteenth-century Russia, into a movie set in contemporary Italy.

Renato Rascel in the lead role gives an extraordinarily fine performance. Rascel, a little fellow with a sensitive face reminiscent of Chaplin, plays a bedraggled

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clerk in a government office whose overwhelming desire is to have a new overcoat. He is particularly pathetic and lovable when he goes out in the cold in his old torn coat with a group of well-covered big shots who are entirely oblivious of his freezing hands. When the timid little clerk gets some money for keeping quiet about a swindle he had learned of, he invests at once in a new overcoat. Clothes make the man, and it is a delight to see how this one blossoms—not into a greedy official like his bosses but—because he is pure in heart—into a fighter for the underdog.

FOR audiences who like their movies crowded with plot and characters, there is the remake of "So Big," based on Edna Ferber's novel. This time Jane Wyman plays the lead role, and if the film seems to lack depth in portraying the many characters who surround her, it makes up for this by stressing Miss Wyman's intense sincerity and warm understanding.

Much happens to Selena, who bounced out of a finishing school in the '90s and into a teaching job in a hard-shelled Dutch community near Chicago, but Serena has gumption and a strong belief that beauty is everywhere—even in cabbages. She survives the kidding she gets from the stolid farmers; she survives the hard work that comes when she marries a handsome widower (Sterling Hayden), whose farm is by no means doing well. She survives his tragic death and the still harder work of turning her truck farm into a profitable business. And throughout all this Serena has time to bring up her son, whom she calls "So Big," and instill in him a love for beauty almost as great as her own. The son through the years is played well by various actors—but especially well by Tommy Rettig, as the eight-year-old whom Selena takes with her when she goes to Chicago to market her vegetables, and by Steve Forest, as the young man who graduates in architecture and then allows himself to be misled temporarily by big money instead of following his mother's high ideals. Henry Blanke's production is handsome and Robert Wise's direction keeps things moving at a fast though often tearful pace.

FOR admirers of mysteries, there's "Murder on Monday," a polite, intelligent English job. Based on R. C. Sherriff's play "Home at Seven," it tells the story of a respectable bank clerk who had amnesia for twenty-four hours and then is shocked to discover that a murder and robbery were committed during that time, under circumstances pointing to his guilt. "Murder on Monday" has an incredible story that is so well acted it becomes almost believable. Ralph Richardson, who also directed the picture, plays the clerk with quiet conviction.

TRYING so hard to get something for everybody into one movie, "Main Street to Broadway" hardly succeeds in pleasing anyone. This is really too bad because a lot of Hollywood and Broadway people collaborated with the Council of the Living Theatre on this venture; and the whole isn't as good as any of its parts. Many stars appear (as themselves), including Tallulah Bankhead, Mary Martin, Shirley Booth, Helen Hayes, Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer, as well as composers, directors, writers, first-nighters, etc.

The young people who play the leads in this story (Tom Morton, Mary Murphy, and Herb Shriner) are very likable. It is not their fault that the Robert E. Sherwood success story they enact is so banal. But the picture comes to life only when Mary Martin offers a Rodgers-Hammerstein song, Shirley Booth hands out autographs, or Tallulah Bankhead gives her all.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

BOOKS

Shaw: The Man Behind the Mask

SEYMOUR KRIM

IBSEN dramatized the truth with the care of a surgeon and the moral steadfastness of an Old Testament hero. Between creating art out of "the living world we see, or the world as it ought to be," as he wrote in his poetic drama "Brand," he could make only one choice. Like Brand himself, the pastor who was finally stoned by the flock he sought to save, Ibsen became the conscience that made the "normal" soul wince and finally want to destroy, in order to protect itself. As we know, G. B. Shaw acclaimed Ibsen as one of his masters and did all that any single individual could do to cram the great Norwegian's plays into the unwilling minds of sentimental Englishmen during the 1890's. It was a noble piece of propagandizing, even if inaccurate, as were Shaw's interpretations of Ibsen's plays as set forth in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891). But it set the stage for what was to become more pronounced as Shaw's career unfolded: namely that he had less respect for the truth than his teacher, Ibsen, and as time goes on it may well become clear that Shaw wrote of "the world as it ought to be"—sentimentalized it, in other words, in spite of masterful disguises.

The root of this evil can be seen in Shaw's pam-

Mr. Krim's literary criticism has appeared in Commentary and other publications.

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phleteering days and even in his drama and music criticism. In his criticism Shaw often exaggerated the significance of what he saw to make it coincide with his own enthusiastic prejudices or theories. Because he was gifted with personal genius—the result of an extremely complex, voracious and fanatical personality —his critical work is often a delight to read, even when it is apparent that an injustice has been done to the matter which inspired the criticism. But in his major works of art it is to be seriously doubted whether his extraordinary personality will sustain their deficiency in reality through the test of time. As a dramatist, Shaw has probably given more pleasure to enlightened audiences than any English-speaking playwright since Oscar Wilde; but as an artist who demands that he be compared with Chekhov and Ibsen, as well as Shakespeare, one finds instead of a real illumination of experience a scintillating but only half-true idealization of it.

It can be said that the best art modifies human character by giving it a truer awareness of reality than it had before; and to the extent that the work of art has been experienced by a member of the audience, the revelation that it contains has a fundamental effect upon sensibility and thought. Unlike the best of the modern playwrights who write in prose—Ibsen and Chekhov—Shaw does not leave this deposit with his audience. True, the audience has been vastly entertained and stimulated, as if by a magician audacious enough to do tricks with life rather than with cards or rabbits; but within an hour there is little memory of the experience except that it provided great pleasure, and gave the illusion that the secrets of existence had been exposed—if only one had been alert enough to remember them.

This is the direct result of Shaw's method, which is to make each of his leading characters the spokesman for a point of view. While the play is in process their rare articulateness suggests that worlds of meaning have been penetrated; but since the words are uttered by characters who have been simplified almost to nursery-story dimensions, the wisdom of the thought takes on an abstract character, lacking in body and therefore not effective in the memory in a specific sense.

Shaw was not the great playwright that he gave the illusion of being. But he was an astonishing human being who, having been inspired by the achievements of original minds such as Marx, Nietzsche and Ibsen, absorbed them to such an imaginative degree that he became the personal embodiment of what to the majority were impersonal doctrines. In his personality and his work he applied the concepts of Communism, the Superman and the New Woman so aggressively, when they were still socially taboo, that their effectiveness was striking; but this was more a matter of brilliant sharp-shooting which made use of the audience's weaknesses, and hence aroused them, than the major artist's intense concentration upon an idea, which finally impresses an audience more conclusively by its very aloofness from it.

Even in the theater, the most public of the arts, the performer or dramatist who plays too completely to his audience lowers himself in its estimation, and more significant, finally lowers his art to the audience's pleasure when it unconsciously wants to be raised to his vision. It is impossible to ignore the evidence that Shaw wanted to impress people more than he wanted to impress their souls: even in his best work, like "St. Joan," where the appeal is most spiritual, it is diminished by the persistent quality of "entertainment," which exacts no demands on the spectators and hence leaves them fundamentally untouched. As Stephen Spender remarks in *George Bernard Shaw: A Critical Survey [Edited by Louis Kronenberger. World Publishing Co., $6]*, Shaw was a great entertainer and, like Chaplin, deserved to become a millionaire for giving so much immediate pleasure; but Shaw was an artist and propagandist as well, so that while one is glad for his millions, his worth must still be measured in more serious terms.

FEW of the critical and biographical articles which make up this new book about Shaw are truly incisive in this sense, with the exception of those written by Spender, Dixon Scott and James Huneker. For the most part the pieces are eulogistic and intimately appreciative, for Shaw's personality, like that of Whitman and Dickens, inspires the kind of affectionate writing where personal admiration for the man transcends the critic's estimate of the work. As edited by Louis Kronenberger, who contributes a characteristically graceful but conventional introduction, the book does however reveal one basic fact that is important to any evaluation of Shaw's function: practically all of the contributors write better about Shaw than they do about other topics. In order to "catch" him they have to be wittier, sharper, and in general more exciting than they usually are. If followed to its logical conclusion, the effect Shaw has on his commentators can be seen to be the one he had on society.

By the verve with which he delivered himself on every contemporary issue, from war to vegetarianism, G.B.S. could animate the most sluggish mind; he inoculated all who saw or read his works with his own moral zest. But the effect of this dizzying breadth of opinion was more general than it was particular or lasting: his outspokenness and seeming fearlessness earned him personal idolatry, because he acted out the romantic desires of the average intelligent man, but the actual influence of his ideas was overshadowed

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by the performance. This is directly opposite to the totally serious artist or critic of society, who subordinates himself to his work in the proportion that he is dedicated to it, and whose reward is not personal adulation but the achievement of a vision. When he is analyzed on the most fundamental level, I believe it can be said that although Shaw appeared to have many points of view, all of them expressed with his usual forcefulness and conviction, he in reality held no exclusive vision of his own creation that dominated his life and gave it purpose—except the idealization of himself.

We find that he fulfilled himself when he put into action ideas that had been conceived by others, and when he fought for their acceptance by the populace at large. This latter point is significant to any evaluation of Shaw, for much of his energy was devoted to the popularization of attitudes that were developed by an elite. He defiantly propagandized for Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Marx, Monet and other major nineteenth century figures because he had learned so much from them himself, and he was too impatient to let their value be decided by history. In fact, it can be said that Shaw was not so much concerned with the intrinsic value of ideas as with their immediate application—the bringing of his special heaven to earth. His zeal in behalf of the men and ideas he admired appeared selfless; but because he identified himself so completely with his gods he took injustice or apathy on the part of the public as a personal insult. Shaw presents the curious spectacle of a man whose imaginative capacity for living out the ideas of others was so intense that the implementing of these concepts became his personal concern, to be fought for with all the wit, audacity and even bullying that he could muster up. There is no question that he was almost fanatically sincere in the espousal of his many beliefs, but in order to understand the lengths he would go to force their acceptance instead of the recognition of their value, it is difficult to ignore the glaring motive of self-justification behind his entire career.

BEING an artist was less important to Shaw than being a genius; and being a genius, as one sees by reading the prefaces to his plays, was to be the highest type of human being that could be conceived —hence the most desirable type. Thus where genius is usually conferred upon an individual as the result of some momentous achievement, Shaw reversed the process and focused attention on the individual rather than the objective value of the achievement.

Hero-worship, whether it is of Joan of Arc or Caesar or any of the figures he was indebted to—"Karl Marx

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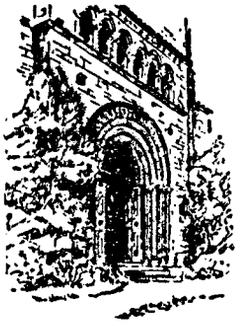

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made a man of me"—plays a significant part in his work; there seems to be little doubt that he consciously aimed at becoming a heroic figure, or genius, after his models. It is this exalted self-interest which became, in fact, the central passion of his career; nor does this invalidate his real concern with many humanitarian and philosophical issues. So great was Shaw's personal ambition to exceed the limit of human perfection that imperfection in the world was a constant source of anger to him. Since he modeled his life on the highest standards his imagination could conceive, and became in the flesh his own greatest work of art, the raggedness of the world appeared twice as ragged in his eyes and demanded that he raise it to his level to appease his need for moral and esthetic perfection.

It is just this necessity for personal perfection in his life, rather than his art, that detracts from Shaw's stature as a playwright. This is not to say that his plays are not artful; but their skill is used to persuade the audience to believe in characters who have been so idealized that they typify one aspect of a complete person. Like Shaw himself, his characters are the attitude they strike: the rest of them has gone into energy for delineating the stance. This gives them, as it did their creator, excellent clarity of outline and a directness of approach that pleases the mind and eye; but the cost in reality, for both the characters and the play, runs high. If Shaw were merely a comic writer who was content with "entertaining," one could accept only his conditions for the fun: but his plays are concerned with serious statements about life which in order to have durable effectiveness must contain some of the pressure of reality. This is not the case. His heroes and heroines are what they would like to be, superior to circumstance even when events warrant that a genuine hero (like Ibsen or Blake) submit to the common laws of gravity so that his effectiveness is real and not merely apparent. The creatures of Shaw's imagination exist in the helium of fantasy: this allows them remarkable buoyancy and freedom of movement—the ability to fell cities and resurrect them in an hour—but of necessity the illusion is more exciting than its value.

It is momentarily delightful to have representations of real people behave as they do in Shaw's plays, for the good are rewarded, the evil punished, and suffering becomes the gold of justice. But such fairy-tales are not equal to the claims that Shaw infers for them in his prefaces: the living fairy-tale of Shaw was not equal to the claims he made for himself. In his work, as in his life, he willed ideal being beyond the capacity of will, and defiantly created a world which for all its apparent humaneness and luminosity contains a pathetic void at the center.

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A Recovery of Reputation and Value

HILAIRE BELLOC: No Alienated Man. By Frederick Wilhelmsen. Sheed & Ward. $2.75.

By FRANCIS SWEENEY

THIS book is not the long-needed Belloc biography, but it gives glimpses of the massive and costly and many-colored treasures that a biography will unfold. What Mr. Wilhelmsen has achieved is a beginning—a wise and witty and continuously exciting beginning—of the urgent business of asserting the stature of Hilaire Belloc and exploring the relevance of his ideas to our perplexed decade.

For it would be an error to write off Belloc as once tentatively important but now as quaint as the single-tax theory, or as flat as the stale champagne of Zuleika Dobson. As the magnitude of the peril from the East enlarges, the vision of what unity under God meant for Belloc is of tragic importance for a sundered and uprooted Christendom. One must not become impatient with his anger, or deny him the historian's right, after he has carefully measured an effect, of asserting a cause. One must not reproach Isaias for not knowing Pilate's name.

Mr. Wilhelmsen defines his purpose as, "an attempt not only to introduce the contemporary reader to Belloc, but also an attempt to disengage, from the vast corpus of Belloclana, those themes that are of permanent value." He succeeds so admirably that one envies the good fortune of the youngsters who confront so winning and lucid an intelligence in his philosophy classes at Santa Clara.

The writing is *con amore* all the way, but with a scholar's candor that does not overlook Belloc's shortcomings. Wilhelmsen regrets that Belloc utterly lacked Chesterton's urbanity and merriment in controversy; that he failed "to elaborate a philosophical defense, as well as an historical defense, of the theory of Christendom." Mr. Wilhelmsen's own prose has a certain Bellocian vigor, and only occasionally does it become too freighted with words and allusions, a *nouvelle richesse* common to the papers of young scholars.

To survey the whole "vast corpus" of Belloc's work would be as elaborate an undertaking as the Lilliputians' exploration of the body of Gulliver. Mr. Wilhelmsen has wisely dealt only with the main themes in Belloc's historical and controversial works. The much-disputed sentence, "The Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith" is cogently explicated in a chapter suggestively entitled, "History from Within." Belloc is shown at work bodying forth a character in one of his biographies, "uniting the Newmanian technique of converging probabilities with the insight of a humanist."

The war against his great adversaries, the Whig tradition in history

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and German *Historismus,* is reported summarily, but with enthusiasm and insight. A sentence like the following should be enough to send us all back to Belloc: "If the myth of Nordic supremacy is discredited today, if the Catholic ethos and past has something of a hearing in the English-speaking world of our generation, if industrial capitalism is no longer thought to be as natural as the air we breathe and if it is seen no longer as the only alternative to Communism, if the first fifteen centuries of the British Isles are not automatically dismissed by the educated—if the air has changed, it is due in no small measure to that long cavalry charge of Hilaire Belloc, prolonged through fifty years of warfare against what he tersely called 'the Barbarians.' "

A few heraldic sketches of Belloc rampant make us impatient for a full-length life:

Congratulating Chesterton because "he had the singular good fortune to have escaped the University."

Consigning polite society to the lower hell of his contempt:

"Good morning, Algernon: Good morning, Percy.

Good morning, Mrs. Roebeck. Christ have mercy!"

Smiting the Higher Criticism, hip and thigh: "That is how the damned fools write: and with brains of that standard Germans ask me to deny my God."

Victorian Enigma

THE ORDEAL OF GEORGE MEREDITH. By Lionel Stevenson. Scribner. $6.

By RILEY HUGHES

"AH! Meredith! Who can define him?" wrote Oscar Wilde in 1888. "His style is chaos illuminated by flashes of lightning. As a writer he has mastered everything except language: as a novelist, he can do everything except tell a story: as an artist he is everything except articulate." And as a man, it is the burden of Mr. Stevenson's slow accretion of fact and circumstance to demonstrate, Meredith also eludes defining. The track from Meredith's major experiences and those of his friends to the events in his poems and novels is palpable and open, yet the more one considers his days the more one sees that the *persona* he used for art was most intricately arrived at.

For years Meredith fled portrait artists and photographers—"in truth there was a presentable phiz, when no one cared for it"—and with equal diligence he hid the ambiguous and hated social background, part-tailor, part-gentleman, his grandfather and father so flagrantly provided. From boyhood Meredith was sure that behind the English outfitting shop to Her Majesty's Navy lay a rich substratum of princely Welsh ancestry. His felt un-Englishness was crucially reinforced by his two years' tuition at the Moravian School at Neuwied on the Rhine. Neuweid added German castles to Welsh ones, and it pro-

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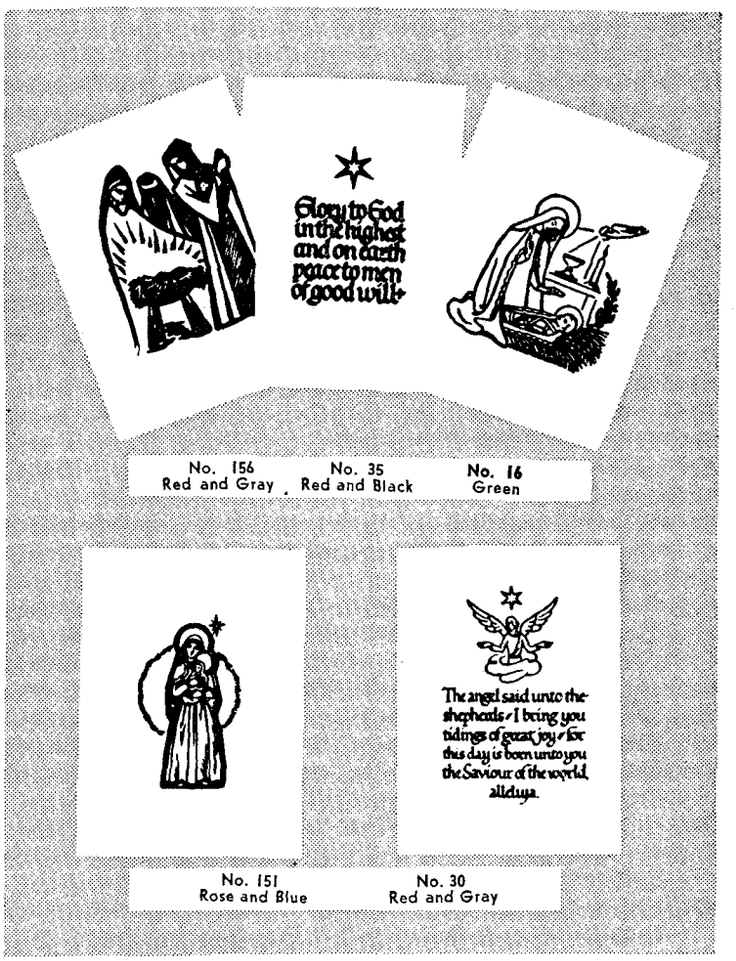
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vided his introverted nature and his achieved scepticism a "devotion," says Mr. Stevenson, "to candid and rational forthrightness." To his art it gave a clarity that was continental, and thus paradoxical and cryptic in the Victorian setting.

And yet it was not his design to be bizarre and unpopular. By indirection—as, after desultory reading for the law, and after his marriage to Peacock's daughter, widowed, older, difficult, he achieved a kind of equilibrium in his personal affairs—he came to a half-admiring, half-rueful acceptance. His poems (when he started out he could more reasonably expect money and a career from verse, not fiction) pleased novelists, and his novels delighted poets. For years he was an elegantly pontificating leader-writer for a provincial paper, and even briefly a foreign correspondent. For longer years he was the anonymous editorial mole for Chapman and Hall. He burrowed deeply with his secrets—his irritating origins and his unhappy marriage—yet he wrote them large across the face of all his work; whatever else was gnarled and cryptic, these were plain.

Fame came at last, after his best work was done, and when his second wife lay painfully dying. Steadily more liberal in his opinions and increasingly conservative in his actions, he lived on to a garrulous old age, exploding in loud and unmirthful laughter. To Shaw he seemed "a relic of the Cosmopolitan Republican Gentleman of the previous generation;" to Chesterton, who found him no relic but magnificently alive, he outlined "a splendid and frantic story" which he first urged G. K. C., and later Wells, to write. Through it all he seemed to live out of a sense of inner bafflement, and though exquisitely the artist he always had something of the amateur about him. Mr. Stevenson does not quite seem the man to play this Hamlet's stops or to pluck out the heart of his mystery; perhaps Meredith's "ordeal" would yield to wit or malice what it refuses to mere dogged, patient annotation.

The Problem of Loving and Hating

THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS. By Dylan Thomas. New Directions. $2.50.

By NICHOLAS JOOST

DYLAN Thomas' new movie script comes as a notable literary event this fall. It is one of those rare volumes about which it honestly may be said that once you take it up you cannot put it down until you've read the last line on the last page. *The Doctors and the Devils* is also a literary curiosity, a screenplay by Dylan Thomas and the first such work to be published as a book prior to its production as a film.

The story is as banal, sordid, and murky as the most Gothic Dickens or Stevenson novel. About a hundred years ago, in Edinburgh, two Irish workmen, Burke and Hare, were tried for murder. What has made their case memorable is the question, never solved, whether they enterprisingly engaged in mass murder of their fellow citizens to supply Dr. Knox, then Edinburgh's most eminent anatomist, with bodies for anatomical research and demonstration.

Macabre stories such as this freckle our screens daily, for the transient titillation of passive audiences. But *The Doctor and the Devils* has the same quality that has made the trial of Burke and Hare remembered when hundreds superficially quite as bloodcurdling have passed into the oblivion of texts on criminal law. That is to say, Dylan Thomas has not shirked his vision of the matter, has not ground out another neo-Radcliffean horror, but very bravely, for a scenarist writing in a mass medium, has stood up to his particular window and has tried to tell us, "This is what I see"—not a mere problem in legal probabilities and technicalities but that profoundest, queasiest, most terrifying problem of all we must deal

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with, the problem of loving and hating, of engagement and indifference, of our responsibility one to another. A hundred years ago this was the problem involved in the judgment of Burke and Hare; it is the problem that still draws us to inspect with fascination and repugnance their lives and fates; and it is the problem Dylan Thomas comments on with a beautifully tentative wisdom.

Fact is done no wrong here by the change of Burke and Hare to Fallon and Broom, of Dr. Knox to Dr. Rock. Like Shakespeare—and need the comparison be invidious, when we think of "Richard III?"—Dylan Thomas compresses, stretches, kneads history into that shapely pattern of authenticity we term art. Best of all, he never dogmatizes, never preaches. He allows the artifact to speak for itself.

If the problem be that complex conflict between Love and Hate—impinging on those other struggles between Morality and Art, between Religion and Science, between the Eternal and the Expedient, between Platonism and Pragmatism—Dylan Thomas never uses his people and his structure as puppets and a skeleton stage for the declamation of what are, after all, truisms. Dylan Thomas envisions life as sacred, as humanly inalienable; he detests Dr. Rock's notions of expediency; yet always he makes his statements through the metaphor of his drama about the doctor and the devils. We are never, as we read the scenario, chilled by the cold winds of speculation. The winds that do chill us, that raise our hackles and make our teeth chatter—with fear—howl from wintry Edinburgh, released after a hundred years' sleep by this Welsh magician.

REVIEWERS

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